

Statement by Ambassador Vahram Kazhoyan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the UN ESCAP

79th Session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for and the Pacific

Agenda item 2: “Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”

Honorable Executive Secretary,

Honorable Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 79th Session of the UN ESCAP offers a good opportunity to reflect upon the achievements, existing challenges and renew collective efforts to get back on track towards the implementation of the sustainable development goals on all levels.

The 2030 Agenda remains at the center of the United Nations efforts in leading effective post-COVID recovery, achieving harmony between economic growth and environment and building peaceful and inclusive societies. As we approach the mid-point of the Decade of Action, the urgency of meaningful progress towards achieving the SDGs cannot be overestimated.

With the devastating socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, conflicts, energy crisis and climate change, this is going to be a challenging task.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Armenia values its cooperation with the UN ESCAP in sustainable development, including green economy, environmental management, innovation and digital transformation through overcoming structural challenges and addressing vulnerabilities.

As a landlocked, middle income country with limited resources, Armenia faces complex development challenges, which require a tailored people-centered approach to unlock the economic potential of the society. Over the past few years my Government has been taking active measures to synchronize the SDGs with Armenia's national priorities and reform agenda, by incorporating them into national strategies.

Devastating consequences of the existing global challenges have undermined Armenia's progress on implementation of SDGs, being further exacerbated by Azerbaijan's large-scale aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020, amidst the COVID pandemic, and continuing since then unprovoked acts of aggression against the territorial integrity of Armenia, causing thousands of casualties, mass-displacements and destruction of critical infrastructure.

The illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor by Azerbaijan, that continues for the fifth month, has resulted in evolving humanitarian and environmental crisis. Despite the international community's calls to restore the unimpeded movement of people and goods alongside this humanitarian lifeline, despite the Order of the International Court of Justice, Azerbaijan continues this inhumane siege depriving the population of Nagorno-Karabakh of their right to life, food, healthcare and freedom of movement. Moreover, with the start of agricultural season the Azerbaijani military deliberately targets the civilians conducting agricultural activities in an attempt to create unbearable conditions for life.

Despite above challenges, Armenia remains determined to continue its path of implementing ambitious reforms aimed at overcoming structural challenges and addressing vulnerabilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Based on the World Bank analysis, Armenia is the 4th most at-risk country in the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region when it comes to the impact of climate change. The country has experienced a 1.3-degree Celsius increase in temperature and a 9 percent decrease in precipitation, but despite all of that, Armenia is committed to increasing its climate ambition and integration into the global agenda on climate change.

In 2021, Armenia declared the goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030. Transitioning to climate neutrality is a critical part of Armenia's energy independence, energy security, and green growth policies. Acknowledging the importance of this transition we have established an ambitious objective to achieve climate neutrality in the second half of this century.

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the vital role of Information and Communication Technologies in driving progress towards implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. ICTs, being cross-cutting in nature, offer enormous potential for promoting and accelerating sustainable development and climate action.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, let me reaffirm Armenia's full commitment to effective multilateral cooperation for development. We look forward to working with all our partners to identify measures to be taken to accelerate implementation of 2030 Agenda and SDGs at all levels.

Thank you.